

IB No. 254/63
20 September 1963
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Manufacturing and Services Division, ORR

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ATTENTION :
FROM : Chief, CIA/PID (NPIC)
SUBJECT : Lhasa-Gartok Road
REFERENCE : Requirement No. ORR 302/63
Project No. C 298/63

1. This memorandum is in response to the referenced requirement which requests:

A. The preparation of annotated maps and text indicating the alignment and condition of the road connecting Lhasa (29 33N - 91 06E) with Gartok (31 44N - 80 22E).

B. Indicate any roads in the area which appear to be under construction or recently completed.

C. Describe any roads leading from this road toward or crossing the Sino-Indian Border.

2. The Lhasa-Gartok Road has been divided into sections to facilitate description. These sections and secondary roads have been plotted on the three enclosed maps.

A. Lhasa-Chaksam Gampa Section

Between Lhasa and Chaksam Gampa (29 19N - 90 43E) the road follows the north bank of the Gya Chu (River), through Chusul Dzong (29 23N - 90 44E) to 29 21N - 90 41E where the road crosses the Brahmaputra River over a pontoon bridge to Chaksam Gampa on the south bank. This section of the road has two lanes, follows level valley terrain and has been graded and improved.

B. Chaksam Gampa- Gyangtse Section

From Chaksam Gampa the road proceeds southwest along the south bank of the Brahmaputra River for about six miles where it turns south going over a pass to the northwestern arm of Yamdrog Tsho (Lake). Between Chaksam Gampa and the western end of this lake the road appears to be two lanes wide with gravel or crushed stone surface and the grades and curves are

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graded. From the west end of Yamdrog Tsho photo coverage is of poor quality and the exact condition of the road is difficult to determine; however, in places it appears to narrow and it cannot be determined if two-lane width is maintained. From approximately 28 55N - 90 10E the road is observed on good quality photography. At this point the road breaks out of rough terrain and is two lanes wide with a gravel or crushed rock surface all the way to Gyangtse (28 56N - 89 36E).

C. Gyangtse-Zhikatsé Section

Between Gyangtse and Zhikatsé (29 17N - 88 53E) the road is two lane, surfaced with gravel or crushed stone and follows the south bank of the Nyang Chu (River). The terrain is nearly level and the road has been graded and improved and is in excellent condition.

D. Zhikatsé-Lhatse Dzong-Tradom Section

Between Zhikatsé and a point about five nautical miles south of Lhatse Dzong this portion of the Lhasa-Gartok Road is two-lanes wide and in good condition. The eastern third appears to have been improved and graded. At 29 06N - 87 34E the road fords the Brahmaputra River and extends west and west northwest to Tradom (29 38N - 84 11E). Obliquity and poor scale photo cover precludes detailed analysis of the road between the ford and Saka (29 30N - 85 10E). From Saka to Tradom the road was observed on good quality photo coverage. Sections of the road between Saka and Lhatse Dzong appeared to be well engineered and grades kept to a minimum because numerous switch-backs were observed at passes. Between Saka and Tradom the road for the most part followed stream valleys, grades were at a minimum and the road has been improved and in places widened to two lanes. The entire section from near Lhatse Dzong to Tradom has been represented on the enclosed map as single-lane improved, although sections at the western end are two lane.

E. Tradom-Gartok Section

For much of the distance between Tradom and Lake Manasarovar the road appears as two ruts where vehicles have passed. Between Lake Manasarovar and Gartok (31 44N - 80 21E) the road appears in better condition and in some areas of rougher terrain the road has definitely been improved.

3. Following is a brief description of the secondary roads extending south from the Lhasa-Gartok Road toward or over the Sino-Indian or Sino-Nepal Border.

A. From Gyangtse (28 56N - 89 36E) a two lane, graded and improved road extends south and southwest to Yatung (27 28N - 88 56E). This road encounters no steep grades until it reaches the Chumbi Valley east of Yatung. This road continues south to Kaju Gampa (27 26N - 88 56E) where two separate roads extend southwest over the Natu Pass and Jelep Pass into Sikkim. The roads

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over the passes have a natural surface, very steep grades and many switch backs. They are single lane and appear to be unserviceable for heavy vehicles.

B. From 29 06N - 87 35E, just south of Lhatse Dzong a two lane road extends to Tingri Dzong (28 35N - 86 53E). Between 29 06N - 87 35E through a divide to Chasho (28 30N - 87 10E) the road encounters considerable grades and may narrow to a single lane in places. Between Chasho and Tingri Dzong this road follows the level valley of the Phung Chu (River) and is graded and improved.

C. The remainder of the roads extending toward or crossing the border are single lane, either improved or unimproved. They will not be described in detail as the map and legend provides adequate information. For the most part these roads only became improved when they near the border in difficult mountainous terrain. The improvements actually do not necessarily mean that the roads are of better quality than the unimproved ones, but cut and fill work is needed before a vehicle could even negotiate the area. Many of the unimproved roads traverse intermountain basins or stream valleys which contain well drained and compacted sand and gravel. Such terrain does not need improvements and in many places vehicles can travel along random routes.

4. The photo analysts assigned to this project were

should you have further questions concerning this project. This memorandum and graphics complete the referenced requirement.

ENCLOSURES:

3 annotated maps (CIA/PID/IB-P-537/63 thru P-539/63)